

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR VOLUME 51

Reflecting on last year's report for Volume 50, I immediately notice a big difference. No snow on the ground. In fact, summer is just ending and we have not yet passed the fall equinox. Volume 51(4) will likely arrive before the snow flies, a milestone indeed. Last year, we were ecstatic to be *almost* back on time. This year, *Madroño* actually is *ahead* of schedule. This achievement is the culmination of years of dedicated effort, led by Editor John Callaway and reinforced by a succession of *Madroño* editorial contributors including Editorial Assistant Laura Wainer, Book Editor Jon Keeley, Noteworthy Collection Editors Dieter Wilken and Margriet Weatherwax, and all of the members of the Board of Editors. It also reflects the effort of our past council, led by the vision and energy of past president Bruce Baldwin. And, lastly, it underscores the fact that *Madroño* is still attracting quality manuscripts and that the practice of botany, in the broad sense, is still alive and well. Ultimately, it is the work of all of you that keeps *Madroño* a viable scientific journal and an indicator of the health of the California Botanical Society.

Nonetheless, John Callaway deserves recognition and our enduring appreciation for his exemplary work as Editor during this past three years. And, in fact, he got it! One of the highlights of society activities in 2004 was our annual banquet in February held at the historic Log Cabin facility at the Presidio in San Francisco. During the evening's festivities, John was given a beautiful framed print of the Sierras as a token of our appreciation for his contribution as *Madroño* editor. Mark Brunell, past second vice president, is to be commended for his excellent job in organizing this event. Our hosts were members of the natural resource management staff of the Presidio Trust. I particularly wish to thank Terry Thomas of the Presidio Trust for her hospitality and support for this function. Earlier in the day, Presidio Trust biologists Katrina Strathman, Mark Frey, and Michael Chassez hosted a tour of state-of-the-art habitat restoration and sensitive species management activities that are taking place in this urban biodiversity hot-spot. Council members Dean Kelch and Staci Markos created elegant floral table settings that much contributed to the festive atmosphere. Along with John Callaway, we also acknowledged the great job that Bruce Baldwin did during his tenure as our immediate past president. Bruce's professionalism and generous spirit lifted the society through some challenging times and we are very fortunate to have had Bruce as president of the society.

Our distinguished speaker at the banquet was Dr. Hal Mooney. Hal spoke on "A Personal View of California Plant Ecology: Past, Present, and Future." Although hard to imagine given his youthful appearance and enthusiasm, Hal chronicled his personal observations of some of the great ecologists in California history and highlighted a past tendency for them to move east once their careers became established. Times have changed. Today, centers of ecology in California, such as the "wilderness" at UC Davis, have become magnets for some of the world's finest ecologists, as are numerous other UC institutions, CSU campuses, non-profit organizations (such as the Nature Conservancy), and natural resource management agencies. Ecology is alive and well in the Golden State.

Other highlights of 2004 included an excellent public

lecture series organized by Second Vice President Stefania Mambelli. These free lectures are held in the Valley Life Sciences Building at UC Berkeley (7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month, excluding February and the summer months). Thanks to our speakers: Walter Koenig, Jeff Corbin, Gretchen LeBuhn, Michael Loik, Will Russell, Jean Langenheim, and Nishi Rajakaruna, for sharing the fruits of their stimulating research. All of the talks were both informative and enjoyable. Elizabeth Zacharias, our student representative, organized delightful post-lecture sessions in the Jepson Herbarium where numerous thoughtful and pleasant discussions were held between guest speakers and attendees. Many thanks to Elizabeth for her deft touch in creating such a conducive (and tasty) setting.

This next year promises to be equally exciting if not more so, because this will be the alternating year in which the California Botanical Society's 21st Graduate Student Meeting will be held. The meeting will be held at San Francisco State University's Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies (Tiburon Center). It will be on Saturday, February 19, 2005. The Tiburon Center is a research and educational facility occupying a spectacular bay view setting on the Tiburon Peninsula in Marin County. There is limited lodging on site and plenty of parking. We will be arranging transportation shuttles for visitors from out of town from the airport to the Tiburon Center. Vicente Garcia, this year's new student representative on the council, Elizabeth Zacharias, last year's student representative, and Diana Benner, a San Francisco State University graduate student, will coordinate the logistical challenges of organizing the meeting. This is an opportunity to showcase the diversity and quality of research that is currently underway by our next generation of botanical scientists. These scientists represent the future of our society and I hope that faculty and members of the society encourage student participation and do everything possible to attend the meeting itself.

On the evening of the Graduate Student Meeting, at the beautiful Tiburon Center Conference Center, we will hold our annual banquet. Our honored guest speaker for the evening will be the distinguished Dr. Arturo Gomez-Pompa. Dr. Gomez-Pompa is a recipient of the 1994 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, member of the National Academies of Science, and distinguished University Professor in the Department of Botany and Plant Sciences at UC Riverside. Dr. Gomez-Pompa has focused on the floristic relationships of economically important tropical plant groups in his native Mexico. He was one of the first scientists to draw the world's attention to our disappearing tropical forests in a classic 1972 paper in *Science*. In a recent paper in *Bioscience* (March 2004), Dr. Gomez-Pompa outlined the challenges facing biodiversity scientists and ethnobotanists and ways that traditional cultural practices of indigenous people might provide solutions to our current biodiversity crisis. Dr. Gomez-Pompa will speak about his latest initiative to promote tropical forest conservation, the Center for Tropical Research (CITRO), a collaborative effort between the University of Vera Cruz and UC Irvine. I am hoping that the banquet is well attended by student participants who may well be excited by the inspiring work that Dr. Gomez-Pompa has accom-

plished, and is still accomplishing, in the arena of biodiversity conservation.

Also, once again, Stefania Mambelli has organized an outstanding public lecture series. Raymond Cranfill of UC Berkeley led off on September 16, 2004, with a talk on "The secret life of ferns"; James Wanket of CSU Sacramento will talk about "Relicts and refugia: late Quaternary forests of the Klamath Mountains" on October 21, 2004. Susan Lambrecht, UC Santa Cruz, will speak on "The cost of flowers in ecological currencies" on November 18, 2004; James Shevock, California Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit and council member, will talk about "Bryogeography of California: what can we learn from the mosses about past and future climate changes?" on January 20, 2005; Scott Stephens, UC Berkeley, will review the "Dynamics of the last, intact, Jeffrey pine ecosystem from northwest Mexico: U.S. restoration implications" on March 17, 2005; Elizabeth Wenk, UC Berkeley, will make a presentation on the "Effect of differing substrates on plant physiology and distribution in the alpine Sierra Nevada" on April 21, 2005; and Michelle McMahon, UC Davis, will speak on "Diversification of floral development in the papilionoid legume tribe Amorphaeae" on May 19, 2005. We are all looking forward to this excellent line up of quality presentations.

Everyone who supports the California Botanical Society is helping to keep our public lecture programs, the annual banquet, graduate student research in the botanical sciences, and our journal *Madroño* a vital part of the fabric of our increasing knowledge of the composition and

function of biological diversity in western North America and sister regions to the south. I personally thank all of you for your continued engagement in this effort. I also want to particularly acknowledge the dedication of the editorial staff of *Madroño* and our California Botanical Society council members. Bruce Baldwin continues to make important contributions to the society as past president. Sue Bainbridge, our corresponding secretary, provides invaluable service. It is difficult to imagine the society functioning without her. Staci Markos, our recording secretary, took the lead in getting the Annetta Carter Scholarship Fund off the ground, among her many other important contributions. Roy Buck continues to do fine work in his capacity as the society's treasurer. Jim Shevock provides exemplary work as an at large member, not to mention his monumental work on the mosses of western North America along with Dan Norris in the first two issues of *Madroño* this year. I again thank Elizabeth Zacharias for her wonderful support of the lecture series last year, and we welcome Vicente Garcia and Diana Benner who will work with Elizabeth in organizing this year's Graduate Student Meeting. Also thanks to our web masters, Curtis Clark and John LeDuke. Finally, a farewell thanks to Anne Bradley, former at large member, who served well for much of her term, and welcome to Jeff Corbin who will replace her as a new member of the council. Thanks to all of your collective efforts, we can celebrate an excellent year of accomplishments, and look forward to yet another year of outstanding achievements in 2005.